

No. 12

Winter 2000

INFORMATION

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Information for Social Change

No. 12 Winter 2000/1

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The editing and production of *Information for Social Change* will change each issue. This issue has been produced and edited by John Vincent.

The cover and back page were designed by Fernando Pacheco Bellas, incorporating “Tree of Knowledge” by Mr Fish.

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"Our prospects depend upon ourselves and on our own capacity to demand our rights. Society may marginalize us; but we have to offer an image that we are people who have virtues and defects, just as anybody else, that the choice of being gay, lesbian, or heterosexual does not imply anything else; this is and will be our battlefield to believe in ourselves and for society to believe in us.

For how long must we endure being treated as if we are sick or pathological?

Why should we allow them to accuse us of being antisocial?

For how long must we be an object of discrimination, of prejudices, of abuses, of blackmail, of repression, of phobias?

Let us show them that we are not sick, that we are not antisocial, and let us struggle against discrimination, abuses, and blackmail.

For the first time we have consciously gathered here in unity. Being afraid can only help the ideas of our detractors.

Being afraid is absurd if we want to defend our rights.

It is necessary to act proudly, to make a daring gesture; it is necessary to act with courage. We will struggle without rest and will conceive our struggle as one of cultural and personal liberation ..."

Quoted from the Manifesto of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Cuba, 28 July 1994¹

¹ reprinted in Ian Lumsden *Machos, maricones and gays: Cuba and homosexuality*. London, Latin America Bureau, 1997 (ISBN: 1899365125)

Editorial

I am a gay man. Five short words – yet each time I come out – and I’ve been doing so for over 25 years – part of me asks “do I need to?” and another bit of me asks “and will ‘they’ still like me?”

Many people argue that lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people (hereafter shorthanded to “LGBT”²) do not need to come out – and, indeed, by doing so are “forcing it down your throat”. Yet what are the alternatives? The other choices seem to me to be to lead a life of pretence, substituting “her” for “him” (or vice versa), never to join in those staff-room conversations about holidays, to lead a closeted and separated life. In the year 2001 surely we should have got beyond all this – yet a quick look at any daily newspaper will show just how rife discrimination against LGBTs is (think “Clause 28”, Brian Souter, Archbishop Winning, queer-bashing and murder).

Quite apart from any personal reasons for wanting to live my life ‘in the flow’, I also believe that LGBTs, particularly those in positions of power and/or privilege, have a responsibility to come out, to lessen the feeling of being isolated (“am I the only one like this?”), to make the environment a bit safer for everyone else.

Yet where are all the ‘out’ LGBTs in the public eye? For every Chris Smith and Ben Bradshaw, Stephen Gateley and Julian Clary, Hayley from “Coronation Street” and Jan Morris, Pam St Clement and Martina Navratilova, there are thousands and thousands of closeted politicians, musicians, entertainers, sportspeople and other well-known individuals.

² See Ellen Greenblatt’s article for greater discussion of terminology.

Turning to our own field, where are all the out LGBT librarians in the UK?

In the US, the long-standing Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table of the American Library Association [ALA] has a strong presence at ALA events, presents annual awards, and publishes regular newsletters (see below for further information). Part of the reason for this is, of course, the sheer numbers of people living in the US, but I think that important elements are also the position of Round Tables in relation to the ALA and the fact that there is a history of minority/ socially excluded individuals and groups writing and speaking about their lives – personal and professional.

In the UK, there is also a flourishing group, the Burning Issues Group: it is currently quite small, but is beginning to consider ways of creating more of an impact. However, its position as an ‘Organisation in Liaison’ with the UK Library Association [LA] may well mean that its presence is not as strongly felt as in the US – perhaps the forthcoming restructuring of the LA will put this group more centre-stage.

I am delighted to edit this issue of *ISC*, and to be able to include contributions from Martin Garnar, Ellen Greenblatt, and Anne Ramsden.

John Vincent
January 2001

GLBTRT – the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table of the American Library Association

“The GLBTRT is a unit of the American Library Association. The GLBTRT was founded in 1970 as the Task Force on Gay Liberation. We are considered to be the nation’s first, gay, lesbian & bisexual professional organization. Here are some of the things we do:

- Each year, we give two book awards (one for literature, one for non-fiction) to the best books with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered themes.
- We present programs at the ALA’s annual conference. Recent topics have included the future of gay books for children, collection development, and mainstreaming gay publishing ...
- We publish a quarterly newsletter.
- We maintain a Clearinghouse of gay, lesbian & bisexual related bibliographies, directories and reading lists.
- We hold Read Aloud’s [sic] and social hours at ALA Midwinter and Annual conferences.”³

Until 1999, the GLBTRT was a Task Force in the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the ALA.

“Clause 28”⁴

What exactly is “Clause 28”?

Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 states that:

³ Taken from the ALA LGBTRT Home Page http://calvin.usc.edu/~trimmer/ala_hp2.html accessed 15 October 2000.

⁴ I am grateful to Anne Ramsden for permission to quote from her essay on the legal background to “Clause 28”. The full version of the essay will be available shortly on the Burning Issues Group Website [jv, January 2001]

- (1) A local authority shall not
 - a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality;
 - b) promote the teaching in any maintained school the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship;
- (2) Nothing in subsection (1) above shall be taken to prohibit the doing of anything for the purpose of treating or preventing the spread of disease.
- (3) In any proceedings in connection with the application of this section a court shall draw such inferences as to the intention of the local authority as may reasonably be drawn from the evidence before it.

Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 states that:

“It shall be the duty of every library authority to provide a comprehensive library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”

It should be noted that if there is no *intention* to promote homosexuality, then there can be no breach of Section 28(1)(a). This does not mean, however, that the requirements of the Section can be evaded simply by citing some other primary purpose. For example, a novel depicting homosexuality in a favourable light might have been stocked purely on the grounds of its literary merit, but this will not prevent it from falling under the remit of Section 28. It is probably enough that policy and decision-makers are aware of the likelihood that homosexuality will be promoted. Further, it may be the case that Section 28 can be breached on the grounds that those in authority *ought* to have been aware that homosexuality would be promoted, even if they were not.

On the other hand, it is obviously not reasonable to expect that library workers will scour their collections for passages tending to promote homosexuality, so ignorance of a book's contents can prevent there having been a breach of Section 28. Likewise, poor judgement in recognising the promotion of homosexuality may provide a defence. Such issues are to be judged on the facts, and this is made clear by sub-section 3 of the Section.

In spite of the wording of sub-section 2 of the Section, it would probably not be acceptable to use the promotion of health issues as a "cover" for promoting homosexuality. Any information which would normally fall within the remit of Section 28 could probably only be justified if it is useful to the functioning of a health initiative. It would be necessary to acknowledge the existence of homosexuality in order to conduct an effective sexual health campaign, and it may be useful to liaise with gay interest groups, but organisers should be wary of straying into areas that are not very strictly connected to "the spread of disease", since they would probably not be protected by the sub-section. In Newcastle upon Tyne, there have been recent criticisms of a health promotion organisation⁵ which is funded by local councils and health authorities on the grounds that homosexuality is thought to be being "promoted using public money"⁶. It should be noted that the likely object of

⁵ This health promotion organisation is MESMAC North East. Website: <http://www.mesmac-northeast.demon.co.uk>

⁶ Colin Hart, Director of the Jesmond Christian Institute, quoted in Young, P. "Councils accused of bankrolling gays: survey claims taxpayers' cash is being used to promote homosexuality" *Evening Chronicle* (Newcastle upon Tyne), 11 November 1999, p.5.

any legal action being brought against a Local Authority in respect of a public library would be the removal of the offending material, and that, provided the material is judged to breach Section 28, this will probably be achieved regardless of whether there is any liability on the part of the Local Authority or its employees.

Perhaps the thorniest issue in interpreting Section 28 is that of how "promotion" is to be construed. It might be said that a relatively innocuous statement such as "homosexuals are human beings" would be an infringement of the Section. Another view might be that the Section is not infringed unless there is encouragement to the public to *become* homosexual. The difficult issue of what exactly is meant by "promotion" would be a matter for the courts, which can consider the purpose of legislation and ministerial statements made in Parliament⁷.

Since it is widely thought that no legal action has ever been brought under Section 28, the above is largely academic. It is perhaps more pertinent to consider how the Section has been perceived in public libraries, and what effect it has actually had on library services.

Anne Ramsden
May 2000

"Clause 28 and its effects"

This Briefing, organised by the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network in conjunction with the Burning Issues Group, was held at the Library Association on 30 August 2000.

⁷ Decided by the House of Lords in *Pepper v Hart* [1993] 1 All ER 42. Referred to in Marston, John and Ward, Richard. *Cases and commentary on constitutional law and administrative law*. Pitman, 1995, p.171-173.

Ros Hardie, Equalities Policy Officer for the Association of London Government [ALG], began by outlining the current work of the ALG, which includes targeting services to LGBT communities. Ros said that it was very clear that "Clause 28" was having an effect, despite the fact that there had not been a single prosecution under this legislation, and, indeed, that there was very sound advice (from Lord Gifford and from the DOE) to indicate that there was no problem in local authorities' continuing to develop services to LGBTs. Instead, the spirit of the law was being used, for example to sanction the denial or withdrawal of funding for LGBT projects, and, as a result, to hamper vital work such as that on developing positive images and on bullying in schools. (The ALG and GALOP⁸ had held a seminar in March 2000 on bullying, and, from that, it had emerged that there was now a lack of information in schools, a lack of forums for discussion, a lack of materials and especially those showing positive images, and that it was difficult to be "out" in school.)

The other major effect was that those local authorities which were developing good practice were very likely to keep quiet about it, as they did not wish to see themselves becoming news features in the tabloids! Self-censorship was also leading to a lack of materials being available (although Ros did cite one very good example, *Council services, lesbians, gay men and the law: a guide for Council staff*, produced by Lewisham Council).

Ros also said that the ALG was working on related issues around schools, particularly on masculinity, and, from that, she did wonder whether a subtle effect of

"Clause 28" might be to reinforce the need for masculine stereotypes in order that men are not perceived as gay (or 'feminine') by their peers.

It was obviously a great disappointment that "Clause 28" has not been repealed, but, given that "Clause 28" contravenes at least three key points of the Human Rights Act, it is now possible that it will have to be repealed when the HRA comes into force in October 2000⁹.

Finally, Ros said that the ALG had argued for equality legislation for London via the new Greater London Authority, and she was pleased to report that this had been achieved, and that the equalities included sexual orientation. It is now ALG's hope that parallel legislation should be adopted by all local authorities (although this principle has not yet been accepted by the Government).

John Vincent, the Networker for the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network and Chair of the Burning Issues Group, then related this to public libraries. He emphasised that no public library has ever been prosecuted via "Clause 28", but that, nevertheless, it had been very successful in creating a climate of fear and confusion. For example, depending on the view of a local authority, community projects might or might not be supported, and he gave some examples of projects which have been supported (Young Gay Men's Project & Lesbian/Bisexual Project, Stockport; London Lesbian Line; Manchester Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras; Oxfordshire County Council's 'Way Out' Groups) and of those which have been denied support (National Youth Bureau Sparetime, Sharetime, East Sussex; Corby Lesbian Line; Cardiff Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras; Birmingham

⁸ GALOP monitor and give advice about LGBTs' treatment by the police.

⁹ To date, this has not happened. (JV, January 2001)

City Council's distribution of a Young People's Guide; Edinburgh City Council's grant of £200 to fund a crèche for a lesbian film and video screening event); in addition, Manchester University Press used "Clause 28" to block publication of a book on gay politics¹⁰

John then looked at some of the background to the introduction of the legislation and the context in which "Clause 28" can be allowed to continue on the statute books. He argued that, whilst in parts of the UK (such as London and Manchester) there might be more liberal views of LGBT communities, this was not generally the case elsewhere, and that there was still a distinct climate of conservatism. He reminded the participants of the numerous areas of discrimination against LGBTs (for example, bullying and violent attacks, in employment, by health authorities and by life insurance companies¹¹) and drew attention to two recent articles in the press: a report by the TUC showed that one in eight people believes that employers should be able to sack staff because they are LGBT¹²; and, in an article in July, Paul Barker examined conservatism "with a small 'c'" – "Lady Young received roughly 5,000 letters about Section 28; fewer than 200 objected to her stand. Her office analysed a one-in-10 sample. About 47 per cent came from

¹⁰ Examples drawn from "The legality of Section 28", an article by Stonewall in *Impact* 3 (4) April 2000, pp50-2; and the Stonewall Website <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/aoc/sec28.html> accessed 4 August 2000.

¹¹ For more information about this, see John Vincent *Lesbians, bisexuals, gay men and transgendered people*. Leeds Metropolitan University (Public Library Policy and Social Exclusion Working Paper no.5), 1999.

¹² Cherry Norton "Gays should be sacked, one in eight believes", *The Independent* 19 April 2000, p10.

men, 29 per cent from women, and 23 per cent were signed by a couple. More than 30 per cent said they were 'puzzled and bewildered'."¹³

In terms of the background, John identified a number of significant factors: these included the work that had been carried out in the mid-1980s by Haringey Council and the Inner London Education Authority on positive images, and the backlash following media attention on *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin*¹⁴. However, John thought that, just as importantly, the media focus on 'political correctness' - in the negative sense - had created a climate in which it was acceptable to attack liberal attitudes. As Yasmin Alibhai-Brown¹⁵ put it:

"Having created the Ultimate Threat, commentators and public figures felt free to let rip with the most rabid and cataclysmic language which they used to describe anything that questioned existing orthodoxies or iniquities."

and writer Terry Sanderson¹⁶ described this struggle in the following terms:

"Now that the loony left is no more, right-wing propagandists have had to find another vehicle with which to launch attacks on their 'progressive' enemies. The new bogey is 'political correctness' which is, of course, a close cousin on the loony left ..."

John suggested that, during this time,

¹³ *The Independent on Sunday* "Focus: Social Values" 30 July 2000, p14.

¹⁴ Susanne Bosche. *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin*. Gay Men's Press, 1983.

¹⁵ "The great backlash" in Sarah Dunant (ed) *The war of the words: the political correctness debate*. Virago, 1994, pp55-75.

¹⁶ "Media Watch" column, *Gay Times*, April 1993.

public libraries became an easy target, and, as a result, many simply dropped their positive stock selection and equalities work¹⁷.

Moreover, the combination of political correctness and the fear of "Clause 28" has led to the falling away of provision for LGBTs – if there was ever much provision in the first place! The unpublished survey¹⁸ by the Burning Issues Group of public library authorities in London showed just how patchy services were. Of the 33 authorities, 12 did not reply; of the remainder, only 2 indicated that they stocked music of interest to LGBTs, none stocked relevant talking books, and 5 did not take any specific periodicals or newspapers. Asked about performance indicators or other ways in which they assessed the needs for and take-up of the services, most used only their issue figures, although 2 included users' comments, 2 looked at their stock turnover, one monitored periodicals usage, and 2 used quality assessment visits. There was also a suggestion that those authorities which, in the past, had established services specifically targeted towards women, the Black communities, disabled people and LGBTs had largely abandoned these either for budgetary reasons or for fear of being labelled 'politically correct'¹⁹.

¹⁷ for more about the political correctness issue, see John Vincent *Political correctness*. Leeds Metropolitan University (Public Library Policy and Social Exclusion Working Paper no.14), 2000.

¹⁸ this was carried out in 1997. A bid to the then Library and Information Commission to carry out an in-depth study of the library and information needs of LGBTs was rejected by Resource as not being a current service priority.

¹⁹ for more information about the survey, see John Vincent *Lesbians, bisexuals, gay men and transgendered people*. Leeds Metropolitan University (Public Library Policy and Social Exclusion Working Paper no.5), 1999.

Whilst the research project, "Public Library Policy and Social Exclusion"²⁰, had not looked in depth at any one socially excluded community, it does show the difference in provision for different groups – for example the contrast between provision for housebound people (the most well-served group) and LGBTs:

	House-bound	LGBT
% where service priority	82%	19%
% with permanent services	93%	13%
% with staff specifically responsible	81%	12%
% with time-limited projects	7%	10%
% with materials selection guidelines	33%	9%

John also indicated that parallel problems were being faced in other disciplines: for example, museums are failing to collect or exhibit LGBT materials, in many cases for fear of "Clause 28" or of somehow putting the museum at risk²¹.

John concluded by emphasising that this was not how it was supposed to be! During the Committee stage of the Bill in the House of Lords, the then Minister of State said that "there can be no question of the clause inhibiting [local authority-funded library services] from stocking any book that they think necessary"²² - yet a climate

²⁰ *Open to all? The public library and social exclusion*. (Resource, October 2000).

²¹ information from notes of a talk by Angela Fussell "Exactly what do you do in bed?" representing lesbians and gay men in social history museums", March 2000.

²² *Hansard (House of Lords)* 1 February 1988, col

of fear now exists, which is blocking the development of services to LGBTs.

The course concluded by putting together a list of **ideas for the ways forward**:

1. The Library Association needs to take a lead in spelling out the exact legal position and for encouraging the development of positive services
2. Ideas for good practice need to be pooled and disseminated [the Network and BIG can make a start on this]
3. More information on stock available and sources of supply need to be circulated [again, the Network and BIG can start to develop these]
4. Library authorities need to develop guidance and training for staff in dealing both with LGBT communities and with any 'backlash' against service provision
5. Library authorities need to draw together evidence of the social benefits of provision to LGBTs, as well as of problems caused by lack of service to LGBTs.

Changing times: information destinations of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in Denver, Colorado²³

Abstract

Historically, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community has been an underserved population by libraries. This study surveyed the Denver (CO)

891.

²³ For a complete version of the following report, including a longer literature review and copies of the survey tool, please direct inquiries to the author at 3333 Regis Blvd., Mail Stop D-20, Denver, CO 80221-1099 or at mgarnar@regis.edu.

LGBT community about information needs during and after the "coming out" process and how various destinations compared in the provision of LGBT information. Results showed that the Denver LGBT community was more likely to use the community center and LGBT bookstores than the library when seeking LGBT information. While some of the Denver survey results support findings from earlier surveys, some new trends not previously evident (such as the Internet) are examined. Bisexual and transgender respondents were underrepresented in the results, so most findings pertain to lesbians and gay men.

Introduction

In the literature of library and information science, the information needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (hereafter LGBT) community have been discussed infrequently, studied less, and never treated in their totality. To date, 3 studies have been published which discuss the information needs of lesbians and gay men (Creelman and Harris²⁴; Whitt²⁵; Joyce and Schrader²⁶). All of the studies focused on a single segment of the LGBT community: lesbians (Creelman and Harris; Whitt) or gay men (Joyce and Schrader). Due to the small number of studies, the geographic coverage of such research has been limited. In order to

²⁴ Creelman, Janet A. E., and Roma M. Harris. "Coming Out: The Information Needs of Lesbians." *Collection Building* 10.3-4 (1990): 37-41.

²⁵ Whitt, Alisa J. "The Information Needs of Lesbians." *Library and Information Science Research* 15 (1993): 275-8

²⁶ Joyce, Steven, and Alvin M. Schrader. "Hidden Perceptions: Edmonton Gay Males and the Edmonton Public Library." *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 22.1 (1997): 19-37.

increase visibility of the information needs of the LGBT community, more studies of this nature must be performed throughout the library community. Populations that are not studied cannot be adequately served. Therefore, it was proposed to survey the Denver (CO) LGBT community about their choices of information destinations.

Since the survey was part of a capstone project for a library degree program, there were some constraints on time and funding that limited the scope of the project. This short survey did not include all topics of previous surveys, but tried to include new developments such as the Internet. Results were analyzed to determine how libraries compare to other information destinations for the LGBT community. Also, an examination of how LGBT patrons seek information will highlight the most popular access points and may suggest areas of weakness for different information agencies.

Literature Review

As mentioned previously, only three surveys that focused on lesbian and gay information needs have been published. Providing good library service to the LGBT community is dependent upon understanding the information needs of that community. It is hard to know if a library's selection of titles is appropriate if the needs of that library's LGBT community are unknown. The challenge is identifying members of the LGBT community so that they can be questioned about their needs. Unlike most other minority characteristics, sexual orientation is not readily visible to the passive observer. The three published surveys of LGBT information needs and information seeking behavior used different methods to reach the LGBT community. Creelman and Harris made contact through two lesbian

community associations in two Canadian cities to identify initial participants, through whom additional participants were contacted for a total of 50 interviews (37-38). Whitt included a survey in a lesbian newsletter based in a North Carolina city and received a total of 141 responses out of 619, or 22.8% (277). Joyce and Schrader contacted a variety of gay community groups in Edmonton, AB, and collected a total of 46 surveys. Each study's population was limited to those who were comfortable enough with their sexual orientation to be a member of an LGBT group or on an LGBT mailing list, though varying degrees of anonymity still exist in those situations.

Creelman and Harris focused on the information needs of lesbians during the "coming out" stage, which is when they were coming to terms with their sexual orientation (37). Their findings showed that the survey participants were very aware of libraries as a source of information and that they relied on printed sources second only to other lesbians (40). Whitt's study examined the information needs of lesbians during and after the coming-out process (277-279). The findings confirmed the importance of libraries during the initial stages of coming out, though libraries were still second to other lesbians in importance as an information resource (278). However, the survey shows that libraries often fail in meeting information needs after the coming-out stage due to dated or missing material (281-282). Bookstores and community resources are cited as alternative sources of information. Joyce and Schrader's study found that the gay male participants ranked the library as the most significant information resources during the coming-out stage (28). Gay organizations and friends were respectively ranked second and third. Like the participants in Whitt's study, the

survey respondents were less happy with the library as an ongoing information resource due to lack of quality materials (35). All three surveys found that libraries played a significant or primary role in meeting the information needs of lesbians and gay men during the coming-out stage. The two surveys that addressed continuing information needs both reported some dissatisfaction with library resources.

Design of Survey and Implementation

The intent of this survey was to supplement the existing literature by examining a new geographic area (Denver), include both lesbians and gay men as well as bisexuals and transgendered persons in the survey populations, and include the Internet as an information resource. Since prior surveys had been limited to Canada and North Carolina, Denver would provide a new perspective from a heretofore-unstudied region. The inclusion of all members of the LGBT community would allow the needs of different segments of the population to be compared using the same data. Finally, though Joyce and Schrader did have some responses that mentioned the Internet as an information resource, the earlier surveys did not address the Internet since it was not a factor at that time.

Information destinations being ranked in the survey included libraries, bookstores (both general and specialty bookstores which cater to the LGBT community), the Internet, and the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Community Services Center of Colorado (hereafter the Center). The Center was a major partner in the distribution of the survey. The board of directors of the Center agreed to distribute some surveys with their February 2000 newsletter and would also make the survey available to groups that use the Center as a meeting place. The survey was included in

370 newsletters going to a selected postal code, which includes Denver's largest concentration of LGBT residents (the Capitol Hill neighborhood). Due to funding issues, surveys included in the Center's newsletter did not include return postage. Additionally, surveys were distributed to an LGBT group that does not meet at the Center, with the aim of including a population that might be unfamiliar with the Center's services. The methodology for collecting surveys was a combination of the tactics used by Whitt and by Joyce and Schrader (277; 25).

Results

90 surveys were collected from groups at the Center, with another 13 returned from the mailing. The non-Center group completed 66 surveys. Altogether, a total of 169 completed surveys were collected for analysis. This number is comparable to the other surveys' sample groups of 46, 50, and 141 (Joyce and Schrader; Creelman and Harris; Whitt). Out of the 169 respondents, there were 57 lesbians and 99 gay men. Since only five bisexuals and five transgender persons completed surveys, the results are not representative of those segments of the LGBT community. Three respondents did not indicate their sexual orientation.

Results of the survey were entered into a spreadsheet and analyzed using the SPSS software package. Some questions did not get the intended response and the results had to be modified from the original design. For one question about the coming-out process, not all respondents followed directions to rank the services in terms of usage, so all responses were collapsed to indicate just that the service was used.

Respondents were asked about the degree to which they were "out" to friends, family, and co-workers, using a continuum

of all, some, or none. The results are in Table 1. Most respondents were comfortable enough with their sexual orientation to share it with other people in some aspect of their lives.

The next table (see Table 2) shows the responses to a question about the information resources they used during the coming-out process. As discussed earlier, rankings were collapsed to indicate usage since results were inconsistent in the survey population. Although the "other" category had some repeated entries for therapists, P-FLAG (Parents, Friends, and Families of Lesbians and Gays), and bars, there were not enough of any single entry to be significant. Responses have been broken down for lesbians and gay men to examine differences and to facilitate comparison with the other studies. The small number of bisexuals and transgender respondents had no measurable effect on the results and are not included in this table. While the ranks for lesbians and gay men are fairly different, only one category contains a statistically significant (Chi Square = 0.049) difference: LGBT bookstores. Lesbians' usage of LGBT bookstores as an information resource was second only to friends, while gay men's usage of LGBT bookstores was tied for fifth place. Other differences in ranking were not statistically significant. Libraries were the third most popular resource for gay men, but tied with the Center in sixth place for use by lesbians, which is why the overall rank of libraries is fifth (out of eight) as an information resource during the coming-out process.

Another section of the survey focused on information seeking behaviors. Respondents were asked to pick one resource as the best place to get LGBT information. Results for Table 3 include the entire sample (less 8 non-responses), since there were no statistically significant

differences based on sexual orientation or gender. The Center and LGBT bookstores are the clear favorites, though the survey had a built-in bias towards the Center since the majority of surveys were distributed to people familiar with its resources. If the two bookstore categories were collapsed into one, they would have a slight edge over the Center, but neither group has a wide margin. The Internet has a solid position as a second tier choice, while general bookstores (if kept separate) and libraries are clearly not identified as primary destinations for LGBT information. If a person's sense of being "out" is considered when calculating the best destination for LGBT information, there are some subtle changes in the numbers. The results showed that respondents who indicated being "out" to all members of a category were even more likely to choose the Center as the primary LGBT information resource. However, respondents who indicated being "out" to only some members of a category were more likely to prefer an LGBT bookstore as their primary information resource. Since the majority of respondents in every "out" category chose "all" (see Table 1), their preferences affected the total sample's results.

The next set of questions in this section is concerned with the way LGBT people seek LGBT information in a particular setting. Respondents were asked to select one option for each resource. Since there were no statistically significant differences between lesbians and gay men, both categories have been combined in Table 4.

The only difference of any size was in LGBT bookstores, where lesbians were slightly more inclined than gay men to browse the shelves. Since some respondents did not indicate a preference for all categories, percentages do not add up to 100%. Information seekers are more

likely to ask a person in environments that are explicitly LGBT-friendly (the Center & LGBT bookstores). General bookstore users are most likely to browse the shelves for LGBT items. Library patrons are most likely to use the catalog, which highlights the importance of using current and accessible language when cataloging items. When a person's sense of being "out" was factored into the preferences, those more likely to ask a person about LGBT information were also more likely to be "out" to more people. In almost every category, respondents who had indicated that they were "out" to all were more likely to ask a person than were respondents who indicated that they were "out" to only some. The number of responses in the "out to none" categories were too low to impact the total sample's results.

Discussion

The findings of this study resonate with many of the earlier studies results but also suggest that some new trends might be occurring. In the coming-out phase, the primacy of friends as an information resource confirms the findings of Creelman and Harris (39) and Whitt (278). However, libraries are not nearly as important when compared with LGBT bookstores. Whether the areas studied by Creelman and Harris and by Whitt did not have LGBT bookstores is unclear, but it seems like the Denver-area LGBT bookstores played a significant role in the coming-out process of lesbians. The experiences of gay men in the Denver survey were more like those of the lesbians in Creelman and Harris's study, with the greatest resource being friends and a secondary (though significant) role assigned to the library. While the rankings of Joyce and Schrader's study do not exactly match the coming-out experiences of Denver gay men, there are still some similarities with regard to bookstores and

the Internet.

The general disappointment with LGBT resources in libraries that was documented in the earlier studies is reflected by the library's low standing as a resource for LGBT information in the Denver study. The rapid growth of the Internet since Joyce and Schrader's study has had a clear impact on the way LGBT information is pursued. Based on the information-seeking behaviors preferred by the Denver respondents, the Center and LGBT bookstores are selected as the best resources because users are not afraid to ask questions about LGBT information. Another reason for the popularity of the Center and LGBT bookstores may be related to issues of comfort and safety. The final question of the survey asked if respondents had experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation when using these resources. No one indicated problems at the Center or at an LGBT bookstore, but 18 people (10.7%) reported harassment while on the Internet and 8 people (4.7%) reported harassment at both general bookstores and libraries. These numbers are a reminder that discrimination can be a factor in meeting or not meeting the information needs of a community.

For libraries, the largest concern is to find out why it has become the place of last resort for LGBT information. With so much LGBT information available over the Internet that can be accessed anonymously, libraries would be hard-pressed to compete if current levels and quality of materials and outreach stay the same. On a positive note, the Denver Public Library recently received a \$30,000 award from the Gill Foundation (a Colorado-based LGBT philanthropic organization) to "increase library materials by, for and about gays, lesbians and

bisexuals”²⁷. While this infusion of money for materials is welcome, having more materials does not necessarily translate into meeting the information needs of the LGBT community. If the low levels of library usage are due not only to not having enough materials, but also to harassment, poor access points, or inadequate public relations, then libraries will never learn this without performing more surveys of this kind. Without knowledge of the LGBT community and their information needs, libraries will never be able to successfully meet the needs of all of their patrons.

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December 2000

Barriers to GLBT Library Service in the Electronic Age

Terminology

Over time, various terminology has been applied to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons. While the term, “homosexual,” has long been eschewed as too clinical by gays and lesbians themselves, it continues to appear in publications by heterosexuals. Both “queer” and “lesbigay” (and the more inclusive “lesbigatr”) have come and gone from popular parlance. When citing another resource in this article, I will be using the terminology employed by that particular publication.

Additionally, the resources cited may vary in regard to their inclusiveness of these groups. Some publications only focus on gays and lesbians – some on gays, lesbians, and bisexuals – others on gays,

²⁷ “Gill Foundation Award to DPL.” *Datalink* 92 (2000): 5.

lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons – and still others on gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered, and questioning persons (ie people questioning their sexual identity). As with terminology, inclusiveness is time-bound and based on whatever is politically correct or in vogue for that time. And likewise, the level of inclusiveness can also be dependent upon whether the article has been written by insiders or outsiders. Whenever I cite another resource in this article, I will be mentioning only the groups included in that particular publication.

And finally, throughout this article I will be using the abbreviation GLBT, or variations thereof such as LBGQTQ, etc – all currently in vogue both in terms of terminology and inclusiveness.

Historical context

In 1994, Cal Gough and I wrote a chapter on “Gay and Lesbian Library Users: Overcoming Barriers to Service” for a book on multiculturalism in libraries²⁸. Seven years later ... how have we fared? To gain a better understanding of the background against which our chapter was written, let’s examine its historical context.

In the early 1990s, here in the United States, it seemed that the next big civil rights battle would be fought in the arena of gay and lesbian rights. In 1992, voters in my current home state of Colorado passed the controversial constitutional Amendment 2 – the provisions of which would enjoin any state government unit from adopting policies prohibiting

²⁸ Ellen Greenblatt and Cal Gough. “Gay and Lesbian Library Users: Overcoming Barriers to Service” in *Diversity and Multiculturalism in Libraries*, edited by Katherine Hoover Hill. (JAI Press, 1994): pp. 227-233.

discrimination against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. Ultimately in 1996, the US Supreme Court declared Amendment 2 unconstitutional.²⁹ Other major issues of the time concerned the hotly debated “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy of the military and the legal recognition of same-sex marriage. Although we predicted in our chapter that the 1990s would be to LGBT civil rights as the 1960s were to African-American civil rights, very little progress has actually been made in the US. The one notable exception, Vermont’s civil union bill, stops far short of bestowing the same rights on same-sex couples as those enjoyed by heterosexual married couples.³⁰ Other places in the world have fared much better. In 1996, South Africa became the first country in the world to protect gay rights in its constitution³¹, and, in 2000, the Netherlands became the first country to permit full-fledged marriages between same-sex couples, complete with divorce guidelines and broader adoption rights.³²

²⁹ For more information on Colorado’s Amendment 2 and the US Supreme Court decision, see Lisa Keen and Suzanne B. Goldberg, *Strangers to the Law: Gay People on Trial (Law, Meaning and Violence)* Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 2000. For Internet resources see: Equality Colorado’s Amendment 2 Fact Sheet <http://www.equalitycolorado.org/resources/factsheets/amendment2.html> and Romer v. Evans <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/4810/queerlaw1.htm>

³⁰ For more information see, the Vermont Civil Union Resource guide <http://www.vermontcivilunion.com/>

³¹ On 8 May 1996, South Africa adopted a constitution whose Bill of Rights guarantees all citizens equal rights and specifically mentions “sexual orientation” as a protected class.

³² “Dutch Approve Rights for Same-Sex Couples,” *London Free Press*, 13/9/2000.

Misinformation and Prejudice

In regard to library services, of the various barriers we addressed in our chapter seven years ago, the biggest obstacles we must contend with continue to be those of misinformation and prejudice. Many librarians have never questioned the heterosexism that pervades library services, policies, and collections.³³ In fact, a 1996 article surveying 465 library school graduates found that almost half (47.7%) had not received any information about GLBT issues in their library school curricula.³⁴ Additionally, since ALA leadership has rarely produced spokespersons advocating for GLBT library users and workers,³⁵ and, since most programming concerning GLBT issues has been offered by such special interest groups as the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table, the vast majority of ALA attendees are not exposed to GLBT concerns through involvement in their national professional association.³⁶ Therefore, it comes as no surprise that so many librarians are indifferent or unaware of the needs of this particular library constituency.

³³ Noted African-American author and librarian Audre Lorde defines heterosexism as the belief in the inherent superiority of heterosexuality and its right to cultural dominance. [“There is No Hierarchy of Oppressions,” *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin* 14 (1983), 9]

³⁴ James V. Carmichael, Jr. and Marilyn L. Shontz, “‘The Last Socially Acceptable Prejudice’: Gay and Lesbian Issues, Social Responsibilities, and Coverage of These Topics in MLIS/LIS Programs.” *The Library Quarterly* 66 (January 1996), 44.

³⁵ However, ALA has taken political stands in a handful of cases, most notably, speaking out against Amendment 2 during the midwinter conference held in Denver in 1992.

³⁶ Carmichael and Shontz, p25.

Stereotypes and myths still exist. As recently as this past November, a local school librarian told me that there were no LGBT students in her school and therefore no need to collect in this area. Studies prove otherwise. A 1999 report shows that between 2% and 4.5% of students will "probably identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual when they are in high school," which means between 1400 to 3550 students in a school district of 70,000 students (roughly the size of the Denver Public Schools district). And if you add in those who say they have been harassed because someone thought they were lesbian, bisexual, or gay, the figures jump to between 4.9% and 8.1% – or between 4830 and 5610 students.³⁷

Furthermore, in building collections and designing services, many librarians (including our colleague above) do not understand or take into account that the constituencies we serve are much broader than LGBTQ users themselves. One study shows that in a typical classroom of thirty students, eight students (27% of the class) will be either lesbian, gay, or bisexual themselves, have one or more lesbian, gay, or bisexual siblings, or one or more lesbian, gay, or bisexual parents.³⁸ Other constituencies to consider include professionals dealing with the community (eg social workers, attorneys, doctors, teachers, etc) and students researching papers.

³⁷ Safe Schools Coalition of Washington, *Eighty-Three Thousand Youth: Selected Findings of Eight Population-Based Studies as They Pertain to Anti-Gay Harassment and the Safety and Well-Being of Sexual Minority Students*, 1999.

³⁸ "Breaking the Silence for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth" (1996) Cited by: PFLAG-Phoenix, "Today's Gay Youth: The Ugly, Frightening Statistics" <http://www.pflag-phoenix.org/youthstats.html>

The effects of our colleague's misinformation could well go beyond doing a disservice to the LGBTQ students in her school, it could prove to be lethal! Suicide rates are extremely high among young people who are questioning their sexuality; plus such students are more likely to drop out of school, become homeless due to rejection by their families, or become substance abusers.³⁹ Feeling isolated and confused, and often dealing with shame, abuse, and violence, these students need access to affirmative information and materials rather than succumbing to the miseducation of their peers or the misinformation of those in authority.

Availability

A longstanding contention regarding LGBTQ library service has been the lack of availability of LGBTQ materials in libraries. Although there has been an enormous growth in LGBTQ publishing over the last two decades, studies continually show that library holdings fall far short of publishing output.⁴⁰ A poll of 250 public and academic libraries conducted by *Library Journal* in 1995 showed that 14% of the libraries had no holdings of LGBTQ materials

³⁹ Studies consistently find that LGBTQ and questioning youth have a 3-7 times higher rate of attempted suicide – eg *Massachusetts Department of Education (1995)*; *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1997)*; *Vermont Department of Education (1997)*. For more information see: R. C. Savin-Williams. "Verbal and Physical Abuse as Stressors in the Lives of Sexual Minority Youth: Associations with School Problems, Running Away, Substance Abuse, Prostitution, and Suicide." *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology* 62 (1994): 261-269.

⁴⁰ See for example: James H. Sweetland and Peter G. Christensen, "Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Titles: Their Treatment in the Review Media and Their Selection by Libraries" *Collection Building* 14, 2 (1995): 32-41.

while 76% held fewer than 150 titles⁴¹ – this despite an estimate that 975 titles had been published in the preceding year.⁴² A 1998 study examining the holdings of LGBT classic and award-winning books in major public libraries in the US and Canada found that on average the libraries surveyed held approximately three quarters of the 222 titles examined.⁴³ While this shows some improvement over the earlier study, one must question why the holdings were not higher considering that the titles in essence formed a LGBT core list. Turning to periodical holdings, a 1996 study found that only 17% of the 92 journal titles examined were held by more than 26 OCLC libraries.⁴⁴ These statistics show that LGBT materials continue to be under-selected in libraries.

Censorship

Another barrier that we addressed in our chapter was censorship. During the last decade, censorship was one of the most pervasive issues in US school and public libraries. Between 1990 and 1999, 497 of the 5,718 challenges recorded by or reported to the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual

Freedom were for materials “with a homosexual theme or ‘promoting homosexuality.’”⁴⁵ And two of the ten most challenged books of that decade were GLBT books: *Daddy's Roommate*⁴⁶ (number 2 on the list) and *Heather Has Two Mommies*⁴⁷ (number 9 on the list).

However, filtering access to the Internet, undoubtedly the most predominant censorship issue today, was not even mentioned in our chapter seven years ago. One of the most ferociously debated topics to hit the library world, filtering concerns the use of blocking software to restrict access to “objectionable” sites on the Internet.⁴⁸ As recently as mid-December 2000, the US Congress passed the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) which mandates that libraries and schools receiving certain types of federal funding must adopt and enforce “Internet safety policies” accompanied by a “technology protection measure” (*read*: filter) to block access to “obscene” pictures and any other materials considered “harmful to minors.”⁴⁹ However, as one may suspect,

⁴¹ Eric Bryant, “Pride & Prejudice,” *Library Journal* (15 June 1995), 37.

⁴² Wendy Thomas, “Gay Lit in the Library” *Library Journal* (15 June 1995), 38.

⁴³ Alex Spence, “Gay Young Adult Fiction in the Public Library: A Comparative Study,” *Public Libraries* 38, no. 4 (July/Aug. 1999), 224-229+.

⁴⁴ Thomas L. Kilpatrick, “A Critical Look at the Availability of Gay and Lesbian Periodical Literature in Libraries and Standard Indexing Services,” *Serials Review* 22 (Winter 1996): 71-81. The titles were taken from the 8th edition of William A. Katz and Linda Sternberg Katz, eds. *Magazines for Libraries: For the General Reader and School, Junior College, College, University, and Public Libraries* (Chicago: Bowker, 1995)

⁴⁵ The 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 1990–1999

<http://www.ala.org/bbooks/bbwdatabase.html>

⁴⁶ Michael Willhoite, *Daddy's Roommate*. Boston, Mass.: Alyson Wonderland, 1990.

⁴⁷ Lesléa Newman, *Heather Has Two Mommies*, Boston, Mass.: Alyson Wonderland, 1989.

⁴⁸ Visiting the following web sites should provide insight into the two sides of the issue: The American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom is opposed to filtering, see “Filters and Filtering” <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/filtersandfiltering.htm> | To visit a site in favor of filtering, see David Burt's “Filtering Facts” <http://www.filteringfacts.org/> (Note: This historically significant site has been archived, and is no longer maintained)

⁴⁹ The text of this act can be found at: http://www.epic.org/free_speech/censorware/cipa.p

just what constitutes "objectionable" is open to interpretation. And even if the definition were clearly agreed upon, to date no filter is 100% effective in filtering out every site that meets the set guidelines. Additionally, since many filtering programs restrict access by targeting specific words within web sites without regard to context, many worthwhile or "inoffensive" pages are unintentionally blocked from use, while conversely many "objectionable" pages remain accessible.⁵⁰ This situation, of course, has broad implications regarding LBGQT information on the Internet. Many LBGQT people turn to the Internet for information and support in what they perceive to be a safe, discrete, nonjudgmental, and anonymous setting. In fact, the Internet has become a "virtual lifeline" to many LBGQT "community members in isolated areas and situations." The use of filters in public and school libraries effectively shuts off this lifeline, creating additional barriers between LBGQT users and the information and services they seek.⁵¹

df

⁵⁰ See Alan Brown, "Four Myths and Facts for Parents and Their New Computers," <http://dfn.org/focus/intl/netmyth.htm>. For a humorous demonstration of how filters work (or more appropriately, don't work), see the results of the Digital Freedom Network's "Foil the Filters Contest" which took place in September 2000 <http://dfn.org/focus/censor/contest.htm>. For GLBT context, see especially the Frolic Award.

⁵¹ Due to space limitations, it is impossible to explore the many facets of this fascinating issue. For more information, see Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), *Access Denied Version 2.0: The Continuing Threat Against Internet Access and Privacy and its Impact on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community: A Report*, December 1999, a collection of reports and essays on this topic. The quote in the previous sentence is taken from page 1 of this report. Of particular interest is: Karen G. Schneider, "Access: The Impact on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community," 10-15.

Bibliographic Access

Access to more traditional forms of information, including books and periodicals, has had its ups and downs over the past seven years. It sustained a major blow when Sandy Berman resigned his position at Hennepin County Library in the aftermath of the administration's controversial decision to discontinue its innovative and socially-sensitive cataloging program upon joining OCLC in 1999.⁵² Berman had long advocated for improvements in subject access, encouraging the creators of *The Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH), the premier subject scheme in the US, to overcome their long history of employing outdated, obscure, and socially-insensitive terminology. His writings and work have led the way to substantial enhancements in this area. LCSH often cites the headings created by Hennepin when updating or creating new subject headings concerning LBGQT terminology.⁵³ However, while the void left by the absence of Berman and the Hennepin records will be difficult to overcome, one mitigating factor is the Library of Congress' SACO program, which, among other things, solicits proposals for new subject headings from practitioners in the field.⁵⁴

⁵² For more information on the controversy that led to Berman's resignation, see: *Library Juice* 2:9, 3 March 1999 http://www.libr.org/Juice/issues/vol2/LJ_2.9.html

⁵³ For more information about subject access, see Ellen Greenblatt, "Homosexuality: The Evolution of a Concept in the Library of Congress Subject Headings" in *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* edited by Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990), 75-101.

⁵⁴ For more information, see: Program for Cooperative Cataloging SACO Home Page <http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/pcc/saco.html>

Another bibliographic access barrier we discussed in our previous work related to periodicals. The context of that discussion took place in a primarily print environment where the major barrier was the lack of indexing resources available for lesbian and gay periodicals. This assertion was reinforced by a 1996 study demonstrating that only 22% of the gay and lesbian titles listed in a standard reference resource were included in eight mainstream indexing and abstracting tools.⁵⁵ The debut in 1998 of NISC's *Gay & Lesbian Abstracts*, which is devoted exclusively to indexing LGBT publications, provided increased access to LGBT periodicals and other publications.⁵⁶

However, in the years that have ensued since writing our chapter, the very nature of periodicals, from acquisitions to format to access, has changed dramatically. Much of our periodical literature is now available in aggregated electronic collections, many of which were purchased through consortia. Indexing is still an important consideration in locating information, but today's users have additional concerns including, among others, identifying which aggregator includes the periodical in question and determining the extent of the digitized publication.⁵⁷ Because of the

⁵⁵ Kilpatrick, 77.

⁵⁶ For more information about *Gay & Lesbian Abstracts*, visit <http://www.nisc.com/factsheets/qgla.htm>. A disagreement over coverage caused the Advisory Board to resign. For more information on this controversy, see Advisory Board member Polly Thistlethwaite's letter, 20 May 1998 <http://listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind9805&L=lezbrian&P=R2117> and NISC's response, 26 May 1998 <http://listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind9805&L=lezbrian&P=R2570> Both of these are contained in the archives of the Lezbrian electronic discussion list.

⁵⁷ For example, not all digitized versions of periodical publications contain the total content of

hefty price tags associated with databases, financial expediency is a major determinant in their contents, from selection of titles by aggregators to their purchase by consortia. Information has become a commodity, and digitization and aggregation decisions will be based on the bottom line. This could have a devastating effect on the publication and distribution of marginal publications that appeal to small segments of the population, such as the LBGTQ community, for only those publications with the broadest appeal (*read*: marketability) will survive.

Conclusion

Today's LBGTQ library users face many of the same barriers discussed in our 1994 chapter. Although many public and academic libraries are engaged in developing their collections, compiling pathfinders and guides, and offering other types of services, LBGTQ users are still vastly underserved and library collections vastly underdeveloped. Some studies suggest that librarians may not be aware of resources that would help them improve these services and collections.⁵⁸ Several tools exist to help librarians in this area.⁵⁹ One resource, *Library Q: The Library Worker's Guide to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Resources*, is only a click

the corresponding print version. Often times book reviews, announcements, and advertisements are excluded in the digitized versions.

⁵⁸ The studies by Sweetland and Christensen and Spence cited above suggest that librarians do not make use of such resources as lists of award-winning GLBT titles.

⁵⁹ See for example: Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt, *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1990) and Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt, "Gay and Lesbian Library Materials: A Book Selector's Toolkit." *The Acquisitions Librarian* 20 (1998): 151-170.

away.⁶⁰ This Website has been specifically developed as an aid to librarians working in the area of LGBTQ librarianship. Modeled after its bricks and mortar counterpart – the friendly neighborhood library – this Website contains both public and technical services oriented resources. Among these, one can find directories, bibliographies, checklists, and other resources compiled by Library Q staff, as well as links to a myriad of resources developed by library workers, bibliophiles, and other experts. Another useful web page, *Indexes to Gay/Lesbian Periodical Articles*, compiled by Polly Thistlethwaite, offers guidance on which periodicals are indexed by which databases.⁶¹ For those interested in subject headings, there's the San Francisco Public Library's wonderful guide to *Finding GLBT Materials in the Library*.⁶² Additionally, electronic discussion lists, such as GAY-LIBN63 and Lezbrian,⁶⁴ offer librarians opportunities to network

⁶⁰ Library Q is available at: <http://library.auraria.edu/libq/>. Some of the more popular features include: virtual Vertical File <http://library.auraria.edu/libq/vertical.html>; Queer Publishers Directory <http://library.auraria.edu/libq/qpubs.html>; and Award-Winning Books and Writers <http://library.auraria.edu/libq/technical.html#Award>

⁶¹ <http://manta.library.colostate.edu/research/gnl/indexes.html>

⁶² http://206.14.7.53/glcenter/access_points_subject_headin.htm

⁶³ GAY-LIBN, The Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Librarians Network. For information regarding subscribing and posting to the list, see: <http://calvin.usc.edu/~trimmet/gay-libn.html>

⁶⁴ Lezbrian, the Lesbian and Bisexual Women Library Workers List. For information regarding subscribing and posting to the list, see: <http://library.auraria.edu/libq/lezbrian>

with those active in the field, as do such web pages as *Directory of GLBT Librarians and Library Workers on the Internet*⁶⁵ and *Who's Who on LEZBRIAN? A List of Out Lesbian and Bisexual Library Workers*.⁶⁶

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January 2001

Book Review

Ian Lumsden *Machos, maricones and gays: Cuba and homosexuality*. London, Latin America Bureau, 199? (ISBN: 1899365125) [originally published by Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1996, ISBN 1 56639 371 7]

Originally published in the US by Temple University Press, Philadelphia, this is an in-depth study of gay men in Cuba from pre-revolution to the present.

The history of the treatment of gay men in Cuba very much reflects Cuba's recent history - this falls into four periods: before the revolution in 1959; the early years of the Revolution (1960s and 1970s); the rectification process (1980s); the Special Period (1990s).

Before the Revolution in 1959, Cuba was used as America's playground, and gay, black and working class people suffered persecution under the Batista dictatorship. After the Revolution, the situation of all oppressed groups improved in Cuba, but this level of improvement was uneven. Some groups – such as women – benefited quickly and obviously: a mass organisation for women, the FMC, was formed, and the

⁶⁵ <http://isd.usc.edu/~trimmer/glbtlibraryworkers.html>

⁶⁶ <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~jveldo/lezbrian/lezout.html>

number of women in professional positions increased greatly. A Family Code was introduced in 1975, which constitutionally made women equal to men, but, nevertheless, Cuba's powerful machismo endured, and it is only very recently that issues such as domestic violence have been discussed in the Cuban press.

The Revolution was also quick to condemn racism, and several senior government positions were taken up by Black revolutionaries. Racism is still a fact of life in Cuba, but Fidel Castro has stated that the Revolution has done all it can to stamp this problem out – the rest is down to the people themselves.

However, much less effort was made to tackle homophobia, and during what the Cubans now refer to as “the lost years” of the Revolution – the 1970s and early 1980s – there was active repression of gay people and institutionalised homophobia. Ian Lumsden attributes this to Cuba's Spanish and African heritage (explored in an essay by Tomas Robaina on “Cuban sexual values and African religious beliefs”), but points out that the Catholic Church has had little negative impact on this issue.

Ian Lumsden is very critical of the Cuban leadership in general, and Fidel Castro in particular, whom, he says, plays on his macho image as “The Commander in Chief”. Fidel does not seem guilty of direct homophobia, but of a more indirect variety which refuses to discuss or accept the gay community as part of the revolutionary struggle. As a result, many gay people who identified with the revolution (and who would have been among its greatest assets) became disenchanted and alienated. Many left Cuba and some even joined the anti-Castro movement in Miami.

At the same time, refreshingly, this book does not take as its starting point the need to be critical of Cuba just because of the country's political position. Ian Lumsden is an associate professor of political science at Atkinson College, York University, Ontario, Canada, and writes in his introduction:

“Postrevolutionary Cuba has at various times filled me with hope and admiration, exasperation and frustration, anger and despair. I have admired the social changes that have benefitted countless Cubans, and I have been outraged by the Castro regime's authoritarian treatment of some of its citizens, including friends of mine, who have been jailed, forced into exile, or cowed in their daily lives. I have marveled at the formulation and implementation of programs that the rest of Latin America cries out for. Yet I have also been exasperated by the regime's bureaucratic nature and disgusted by its dogmatic imposition of policies that were foredoomed to failure and that inevitably brought hardships to ordinary Cubans.” (p xi)

In the 1980s, Cuba went through a rectification process, aimed at breathing new economic and political life into the country. Old policies and practices were challenged, many of them were scrapped, and the country generally “opened up”. This created space for the gay community, and others, to raise their concerns and discuss their requirements as citizens of Cuba. This led to changes in the law and sex education. The erosion of traditional machismo accelerated, but a setback occurred as a result of AIDS, which Cuba reacted to by confining PWAs in secure sanatoria. This policy has since been reversed.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the tightening of the US blockade, Cuba entered a Special Period during the

1990s. This impacted on all sectors of Cuban society, but had a disproportionate effect on the gay community. Cuba has now got over this crisis, partly through increased tourism, although this has proved a double-edged sword – the economy is recovering, but organised crime and other related phenomena have reappeared.

Gay life in Havana today reflects what Lumsden calls “an imperfect revolution in an imperfect world”. Gay people are able to make a much greater contribution to the revolution and to key sectors of Cuban life. One major breakthrough occurred in the field of cinema with the release – and official approval – of “Strawberries and Chocolate”, whose main characters are a homophobic Young Communist and his gay friend. In the music industry new wave Cuban singer-songwriters such as Pablo Milanes were breaking down barriers through songs such as “The Original Sin” which demands the right of gay people in Cuba to “feel that they can see their tree, their park, their sun, like you and I... that they can surrender their hearts in the most sweet intimacy of love”. Cuba, which has a rich cultural life, has used the cultural industries to challenge age-old prejudices, and now there are many well-known gay Cuban poets, actors, directors and singers.

The manifesto of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Cuba (28 July 1994) makes a list of simple demands for more space, more meeting places, more freedom and more means of expression:

“Every individual’s sexual freedom should be respected”.

This should have been recognised by the Cuban leadership in 1959, but the drive for collective socialism trampled many individual aspirations in its path. The US blockade of Cuba distorted Cuba’s

development, but this is no excuse for a revolutionary leadership and Communist Party to depart from basic Marxist-Leninist principles.

As Ian Lumsden says, recognising that there are very stereotyped views, both of Cuba and of gay men:

“My study has been written as a contribution to this discourse. To a certain extent it represents a response to the lack of information, to misinformation, and to prejudiced opinions, particularly within the gay communities of North America of which I am a part. My work is also intended to enlighten general readers, including those Leftists who ignore the oppression of homosexuals when they denounce violation of human rights in the Third World.” (p xxiii)

This is a fascinating book, in part the result of personal interest and travel in Latin America⁶⁷ and in part a well-researched study. In places, we felt that it was a bit too well-researched, as references and quotes got in the way of some of the points Lumsden was making, but, overall, this is an important work which deserves wider readership. It presents a balanced view of Cuba and homosexuality. It is critical but generally supportive of the broad social improvements that have taken place in Cuba since 1959. Cuba provides health, education and social services which are the envy of most developing countries and many developed countries. Cuba has achieved much over the last 41 years, but some shadows – including the treatment of

⁶⁷ Ian Lumsden is also the author of *Homosexuality, society and the state in Mexico/Homosexualidad, sociedad y estado en México*. Mexico City/Toronto: Solediciones/Canadian Gay Archives, 1991 (and, according to the back cover of the book under review, was, in 1996, in the process of writing a book about homosexuality in Costa Rica).

gay people – lie across these achievements. It is to be hoped that the struggle to build socialism in Cuba will continue in the future, with the active and welcome involvement of all sectors of the population.

John Pateman & John Vincent
October 2000

The Burning Issues Group

The four core aims of the Group are:

- To improve the quality of library and information services for lesbians and gay men and thus improve use and quality of library and information services overall
- To work in partnership with relevant agencies to develop strategies and policies for service development and training
- To share and encourage best practice
- To be open and available for any library worker, or anyone, interested or involved in this area of service provision.

For further information, please visit our Website (www.croydononline.org/hs/bissues) or contact the Group's Secretary, Mark Norman normanm@regents.ac.uk

Social Exclusion Action Planning Network

Introduction

The Social Exclusion Action Planning Network is a network of public libraries, other organisations and individuals committed to tackling social exclusion.

Formed following a seminar in February 1999 (as part of the dissemination and publicity for the then Library and Information Commission-funded research project, *Public Library Policy and Social Exclusion*, the report of which is published under the title, *Open to All?*) the Network runs courses, seminars and conferences, and publishes a monthly Newsletter.

Launched nationally at the Public Library Authorities Conference in Torquay in October 1999, the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network now has 46 organisational and 11 individual members.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network is to assist public libraries to tackle social exclusion through interaction with their local communities. This will be achieved by:

- putting the research findings of the Library and Information Commission-funded project, *Public Library Policy and Social Exclusion*, and other policy initiatives into practice;
- providing information on current initiatives to tackle social exclusion and to explore how these may be applied to public libraries and related local services;
- drawing on current practice and explore developments in the contribution that public libraries make in tackling social exclusion, and to record and share these within the Network and more widely;
- assisting in creating opportunities for developing joint approaches to tackling social exclusion.

(Agreed 2 December 1999)

Benefits of joining the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network

Library authorities that join the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network will:

- have an opportunity to share expertise in tackling social exclusion and to discuss this with colleagues from other authorities;
- receive information to help keep abreast of developments in work on combatting social exclusion generally;
- receive copies of the monthly Newsletter;
- have an opportunity to learn from the

Research Project and to implement its findings;

- be able to book places on Network courses and seminars at reduced cost;
- have an opportunity to draw on the consultancy skills of the Research Project team.

Membership

Public libraries, other organisations and individuals are welcome to join the Network.

For further details, please contact John Vincent, Wisteria Cottage, Nadderwater, Exeter EX4 2JQ
E-mail: john@nadder.freemove.co.uk

Response to *ISC* issue no.11

The following letter has been received:

“The summer issue of *Information for Change* has made a surprisingly welcomed impact on those few staff I have been able to speak with. I spoke to five black and Asian members of staff, and they had mixed feelings. On the one hand, they felt relief to have confirmed the suspicion that a culture of exclusion exists. This seems surprising because there is so much evidence of exclusion, and it is officially acknowledged, my own guess is that it is probably difficult to ascribe the term to people we work with. On the other hand, the reality of just how widespread and determined this practice is was daunting. The opinion of the few white colleagues I spoke to was basically disbelief, shock and sympathy that the degree of bias was so unequivocal.

It occurred to me that a moral in the story was that publicising the racial divide may contribute to a change in attitude, in a way that a change of legislation could not bring about. Most white staff underestimate the scale of

exclusion practiced, but if confronted with unarguable facts they may choose to change. The culture may be more receptive to this change today than it was in the past.”

H. Beckford
October 2000

Black Contribution to British Librarianship Conference⁶⁸

I attended the conference ‘Black contribution to librarianship’ this year, each year the quality of guest speakers seems to improve, I found the keynote address from Ismail Abdullhai⁶⁹ inspiring.

The overall theme of the conference emerged with many comments referring to ‘self improvement’, black and Asian librarians were being welcomed and encouraged to organize and promote their interests within the hierarchy of the Library Association. This principle is unarguable, and is suggested with the sincere hope of change. However, in the context of trying to alter the existing culture within the LA and the institution at large, it might be construed as naïve, tantamount to asking the newly ‘freed men’ of early 20th Century America, or the devastated post war Germany, to promote itself. To be taken seriously, such sentiments would need to be supported by deeds, and the unanimity of opinion that black and Asian role models are invaluable, provides an obvious area on which to concentrate.

At the meeting Bob McKee⁷⁰ spoke of ‘infiltrating’ the LA. G Cornish⁷¹ opined

⁶⁸ A one-day conference held by the LA, 17 November 2000

⁶⁹ Associate Professor, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia

⁷⁰ Chief Executive of the LA

⁷¹ Graham Cornish, LA President 2000

for black and Asian faces at meetings he attended, I Johnson⁷² spoke of 'distance learning', M Mason⁷³ made an embarrassing attempt to reply. They each appeared to be unaware that the system they were encouraging black and Asian staff to infiltrate is staffed by people determined to retain a privilege. The difficulty for this mindset is the perception that the bias practiced by Englishmen is genteel, harmless and in good tradition, it's in this way that bias then becomes 'a bit of fun' or the 'victim' thought of having 'a chip on the shoulder'.

With my own employer, whilst it's no surprise to wake up to librarians created overnight without a whisper of opportunity, I struggle to be recognized as qualified. This has become an acceptable joke with a couple of white colleagues that I'm inclined toward. The danger is in working with another who has not succeeded to qualify, nor sit an interview; try as one might to remain good natured, it is so easy to challenge a colleague with the accusation that such good fortune was undeserved. I have found this situation to require excruciating sensitivity on both sides, it is an unwritten policy understood from adolescence, which promotes and legitimizes racial bias. I am fortunate to work with some good people, with whom I'm able to share a genuine good morning, a tea time biscuit, and appreciation of my position. Nevertheless, am I guilty [or] not guilty of a collusion, of contributing to the institutional perception that this type of genteel bias is acceptable?

It must be recognized that there are different cultures of racial bias. Unlike the stereotype for the police in this country,

⁷² Ian Johnson, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland

⁷³ Mark Mason, Head of Museums and Libraries International Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

the racial bias I experience is not overtly aggressive, but equally, after many years' experience, I think it is fair to say that my employer would not promote people of the calibre of Shiraz Durrani⁷⁴. I think this true not just because of the facts, but also the attempts to explain and portray this as fair.

It would be helpful to all if a corpus of information were compiled to show the nuances of bias within the institution. It would be fair to those employers who are sincere in attempting to change, and perhaps encourage those which are not.

Has no one at the LA considered that the poetry or story telling to end the conferences might be condescending? Is this the usual custom at conferences or thought best suited for the black and Asian librarians?

H Beckford
December 2000

Book Review

Capitalism in crisis by Fidel Castro, published by Ocean Press, and available from Global Book Marketing, 38 King Street, London WC2E 8JT at £15.00 inc. postage.

This volume captures Fidel Castro's views on globalisation and world politics today, in speeches made at international, regional and Cuban gatherings from May 1998 to April 2000. The theme of globalism and neo-liberalism runs through these speeches, but not in a repetitive way. Fidel can adapt his talk to suit his audience, without being boring or patronising. Since the earliest days of the Revolution, Fidel has been a great communicator, and he has the gift of turning complex social, economic and political issues into language that ordinary people can

⁷⁴ Editor of issue 11 of *ISC*, and another contributor to the "Black Contribution" Conference

understand. Anyone who has read Fidel's early speeches – when he addressed mass crowds in Havana's revolution square on issues such as land reform and racism – will remember that he constantly asked his audience "Do you understand what I am saying?" Fidel has always made sure that his messages are understood by the people of Cuba. One of the techniques that he employs for this purpose is that of analogy. Here is an example:

"Globalisation is an objective reality underlining the fact that we are all passengers on the same vessel – this planet where we all live. But passengers on this vessel are travelling in very different conditions.

A trifling minority is travelling in luxurious cabins, furnished with the internet, cell phones and access to global communications networks. They enjoy a nutritional, abundant and balanced diet as well as clean water supplies. They have access to sophisticated medical care and culture.

The overwhelming and suffering majority is travelling in conditions that resemble the terrible slave trade from Africa to America in our colonial past. That is, 85 percent of the passengers on this ship are crowded together in its dirty hold, suffering hunger, disease and helplessness.

Obviously this vessel is carrying too much injustice to remain afloat, pursuing such an irrational and senseless route... It is our duty to take our rightful place at the helm and ensure that all passengers can travel in conditions of solidarity, equity and justice".

This metaphor, used in Fidel's opening speech to the South Summit, 12 April 2000 is a powerful device for conveying his message.

The global economy

Fidel points out how America's departure from the gold standard, the printing of dollars, and its ownership of the IMF and World Bank, allows the US to dominate the world's economy. In this context he sees the Euro as a welcome development – to counter the power

of the dollar – and those on the left who are opposed to a federal Europe should take note.

Neo-liberalism has widened the gap between rich and poor:

"In 1960, the difference of incomes between the wealthiest 20% of the world's population living in the developed countries and those of the poorest 20% living in the Third World was 30 to one. By 1997, that ratio was 74 to one... The OECD member countries, with 19% of the world's population, account for 71% of the international trade in goods and services, 58% of direct foreign investment and 91% of all internet users".

Neo-liberalism has not worked:

"Economic failure is evident. Under the neo liberal policies, the world economy experienced a global growth between 1975 and 1998 which hardly amounted to half of that attained between 1945 and 1975 with Keynesian market deregulation policies and the state's active participation in the economy"

Neo liberalism has created madhouse economics:

"Presently \$727 billion from the world's central banks' reserves are in the United States. This leads to the paradox that with their reserves the poor countries are offering cheap long term financing to the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world while such reserves could be better invested in economic and social development"

The Soviet Union and Russia

Fidel's analysis of the downfall of the Soviet Union is that this was not caused by internal contradictions, but by external forces:

"In fact, the socialist bloc and the Soviet Union were not destroyed fundamentally by their own errors; this infernal machinery of lies, deception and disinformation destroyed them. They were lead to believe... the illusion that these consumer societies... were the most wonderful things that could ever be

imagined”

Fidel looks at the effect of neo-liberalism on Russia:

“They took their neoliberal and market recipes to the former Soviet Union, causing destruction, truly incredible destruction, dismembering nations. They brought about the economic and political dismantling of the federal republics reducing life expectancy in some cases by 14 and 15 years, multiplying infant mortality by three to four times and generating social and economic problems which not even a resurrected Dante would dare to imagine”

The Cuban Revolution

Fidel points out the achievements of the Cuban education, health and social welfare systems and the spirit of internationalism which pervades Cuban teachers and doctors who have worked, in their thousands, in many Latin American and African countries, often in the most inaccessible areas.

Fidel explains how he read Marx and Engels to make sense out of life:

“I absorbed the basic principles that I learned from those books and they helped me understand the society in which I lived ... For the first time in my life I realised a few truths.”

He then put these ideas into practice in Cuba, but for this he needed the assistance of the Soviet Union who gave Cuba oil, raw materials, food and many other things, in return for sugar. But, above all else, the Soviet Union gave Cuba:

“time to build a consciousness; it gave us time to sow ideas; it gave us time to create a new political culture. It gave us time! Enough time to build the strength that enabled us later to resist the most incredibly hard times”.

This is a reference to the US blockade (imposed on Cuba as a reaction to land reform), the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Special Period (made

necessary by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the tightening of the US blockade), and the many attempts on Fidel’s life: “In summary, do you know how many assassination plots were investigated and known about in various degrees? A total of 637”

Capitalism and Communism

The twentieth century was dominated by a global struggle between Capitalism which is

“the continuation of the slave system under an equally inhuman and merciless form of exploitation”

and Communism,

“with the distribution formula that goes ‘From each according to their work, to each according to their needs ...’ And how wise was Marx when he spoke of two stages: one socialist, the other communist, the first governed by the formula ‘From each according to their ability, to each according to their work’ ... For me, the socialist formula is a necessarily unjust formula, but it is far better than the repugnant capitalist society where those who really do contribute according to their work receive almost nothing, while the laziest members of society get almost everything.”

Another distinction is that “they have infinite financial capital and almost zero human capital. We are doing things with zero financial capital ... but substantial human capital created throughout these 40 years”.

As for the much vaunted two party system, the Democratic and Republican Parties “are so exactly alike that they have established a true one-party system, or better still, the most perfect single-party system in the world, through this fabulous mechanism of having two parties resembling each other like two peas in a pod”.

US and UK leaders “need to tell the world something, so they say that everything they are doing is aimed at a future when the whole world is middle class.” Owing to the lies, misinformation and propaganda spread about Cuba by the USA:

“for millions of people in the world we are torturers, violators of human rights, totalitarian. Yes, we are totalitarian in as much as we have established total justice and a totally true humane spirit... We prefer our socialism with all its imperfections; we prefer the totalitarianism of truth, justice, sincerity, authenticity; the totalitarianism of truly humanitarian feelings; the totalitarianism of the type of multiparty system we practice”

Yugoslavia and Iraq

Fidel condemns the attack on Yugoslavia: “During the 45 years that the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia existed there was peace among all those ethnic groups”. Having created thousands of refugees, America and Britain took in only a handful each: “The two countries combined assisted some 0.8 percent of the refugees – a rather negligible number”.

Fidel also condemns the bombing of Iraq: “The two main leaders, of course, are the United States and the United Kingdom. They are also the two countries bombing Iraq every day. Nobody remembers this, but it happens every day. It has become a habit, a daily shooting exercise to preserve their right to bomb every day”. Fidel compares the cost of these wars with other uses for the money: “With \$1 billion, two million children can be saved; with \$2 billion, four million children; with \$2.2 billion, you could save the lives of 4.4 million children. Everyone knows, including the World Health Organisation, that about 12 million children die of curable diseases.”

He makes a similar point regarding the cost of US election campaigns: “The resources spent in just one of these election years would be enough to build all the schools the world needs...and with a small amount of the annual figure, they could offer school meals to all the children who need it, and pay teachers a decent salary”.

The Battle of Ideas

Fidel recalls how he was saved from death in

his guerilla struggle against Batista, when he was captured and protected by a Lieutenant who told his men “You cannot kill ideas, you cannot kill ideas”:

“As that lieutenant said, ideas cannot be killed. Our ideas did not die; no one could kill them. And the ideas we sowed and developed during those 30 odd years until 1991, when the “special period” began, were what gave us the strength to resist. Without those years we had to educate, sow ideas, build awareness, instill feelings of solidarity and a generous internationalist spirit, our people would not have had the strength to resist.”

Not all global threats are bad:

“I can certainly speak of another global threat, namely, ideas ... We should all help globalise ideas, help them expand. We should all work the miracle of sending them everywhere ... Those are indeed global threats: speaking, reasoning, explaining, demonstrating.”

And so, as ever, Fidel leaves us with a positive message: that progressive ideas are worth talking about and fighting for; that taking on the IMF and World Bank can make a difference; and that there is space for all of us to live happy, successful and peaceful lives on this global ship, planet Earth.

John Pateman
November 2000

New Title

Daisy Rubiera Castillo. *Reyita: the life of a black Cuban woman in the twentieth century (1902-1997)*. Latin American Bureau, 2000. £8.99 (ISBN: 1899365 34 6)

Told by her daughter, this book is based on extensive interviews with Reyita and is “a vibrant testimony which deals with all the intimate and public events in the life of this woman of extraordinary determination, who shares with us her religious faith, her sustaining love for her

numerous family and her ability to work hard for her independence.”

Information for Social Change

Information for Social Change is an activist organisation that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers. It is committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant paradigms of library and information work and publishes its own journal, *Information for Social Change*.

The ways by which information is controlled and mediated has a serious influence on the ways people think, how they communicate, what they believe is “the real world”, what the limits of permissible are. This applies equally to information that comes through the channels of the mass media, through our bookshops or through our libraries.

Of course, free and equal access to information is a myth throughout the world, although different situations pertain in different countries. Control is more explicit and cruder in some places, more “sophisticated” and more invisible elsewhere (for example in Britain). One of the aims of Information for Social Change is to document those situations.

But we want to go further than that, documenting also the alternatives to this control, the radical and progressive channels by which truly unfettered, unmediated ideas may circulate. And further still: to encourage information workers to come together, to share ideas, to foster these alternatives – whether we are publishers, librarians, booksellers, communications workers or distributors. Whoever you are, if you are in sympathy with us, join us.

Statement of Aims

- To address issues of freedom of information and censorship as they affect library and information work
- To promote alternatives to mainstream library and information provision
- To provide a forum for the exchange of radical views on library and information issues
- To debate ethics and freedom with the library and information professions
- To challenge the dominant paradigms of library and information work
- To network with and support other progressive library and information organisations.

Activities

As well as publishing *Information for Social Change* twice a year, we also organise seminars and conferences with other progressive organisations such as LINK – a Network for North South Library Development. Conference themes have included:

- Better Read than Dead: libraries in China, Cuba, People’s Korea and Vietnam
- People without Places: the information needs of refugees and asylum seekers
- Libraries and Social and Political Exclusion: an international perspective

The proceedings of these conferences were subsequently published and are available from the editorial address.

Join us!

I / my organisation would like to subscribe to Information for Social Change

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Please send cheques, made payable to "J. Pateman" to 32 Petten Grove, Orpington, Kent BR5 4PU

Getting involved

Do you want to contribute to Information for Social Change? Please indicate your areas of interest:

- Writing articles for the journal
- Reviewing publications
- Supplying news items
- Networking
- Join the editorial board
- Organise conferences and events.

The Progressive Librarians Guild

What is the Progressive Librarians Guild?

PLG is a US-based organization which believes that librarians are information workers, communications workers, education workers, technical workers. Like workers in every sector, our work brings us up against economic, political, social and cultural issues. Cataloging, indexing, acquisitions policy and collection development, the character of reference services, library automation, library management, and virtually every other library issue embody value-choices which are broadly political. PLG members aim to make these choices explicit, initiate

discussion, draw political conclusions, and formulate plans of action for radical change.

PLG's journal, *Progressive Librarian* is a forum for critical perspectives in Librarianship, featuring articles, book reviews, bibliographies, reports and documents that explore progressive perspectives on librarianship and information issues.

Contact: Mark Rosenzweig for membership and subscription information: iskra@earthlink.net
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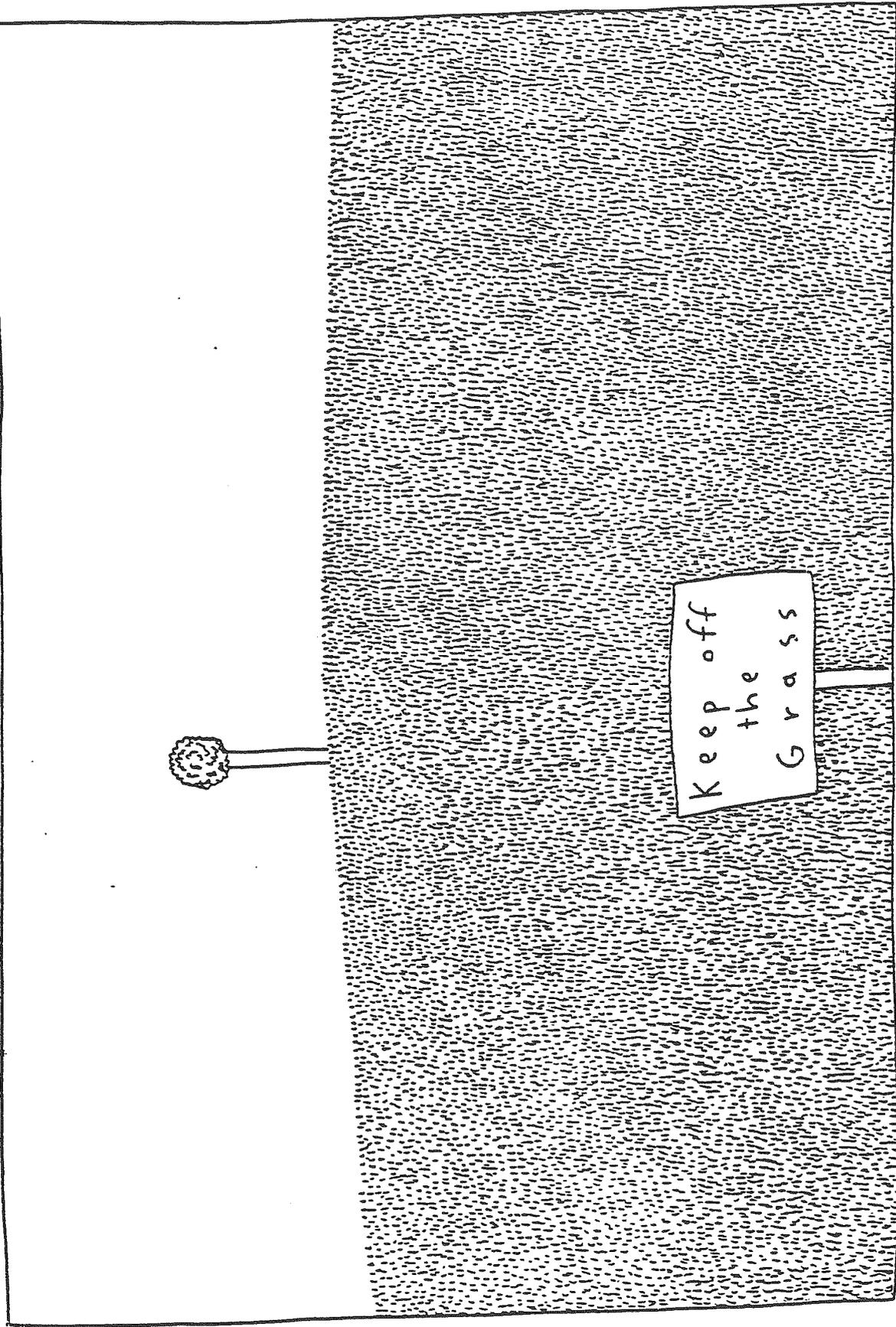
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